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ER-3-0286

21 July 52 - als

23 June 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Psychological Warfare against the USSR; Proposed Presidential Statement.

REFERENCE : State Department Cable 2044 of June 19, from Ambassador Kennan.

1. Attached hereto is a copy of the reference telegram, the contents of which are of particular interest and the concluding recommendations of which may raise some serious problems and policy questions for us.

2. The net of the recommendation is that there should be no major American statements attacking the Soviet Union during the immediate future -- in order that an opportunity may be given to observe whether the Russians will begin to modify their propaganda attacks against the United States. This recommendation, of course, has a bearing upon the proposed Presidential statement which has suffered so many delays and misfortunes from the time it was originally proposed. The Kennan recommendation may be automatically taken care of by the length of time which will probably ensue during the further study and consideration of our draft by Admiral Souers and others. At the same time I am anxious for you to have the Kennan recommendation in mind, in the event that the President or Admiral Souers should speak to you about this matter.

3. It may develop as speculated by Mr. Kennan that, in return for a modification of our psychological warfare attacks against the Soviet Union, they would be willing to reduce to some extent their attacks on us. This is a very uncertain prospect at best, and it should be borne in mind that this country suffered endless provocation and vilification at the hands of the Russians before we decided to take up the cudgels and return some of the blows that we had been receiving for so long. I do not believe that we should accept Vishinsky's analysis and rationale -- namely that they are attacking us in response to our attacks on them. The whole record since the war simply does not bear this out. One other thought -- this is one of the best testimonials that we have yet received of the efficacy of our psychological warfare attacks against the Soviet Union. We are obviously hitting them where it hurts. It seems to me that the

State Dept. review completed

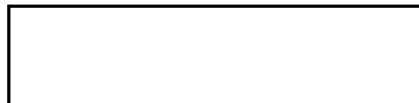
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Kennan proposal, if pushed to its logical extreme, would be a putting of the cart before the horse. Why should we back down first in the hope that the Russians will reciprocate? Since they started the fracas, threw the first dead cats, and are well aware of the fact that they did so -- why should they not be the ones to begin the moderation and not ourselves?



FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

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Encl (1)
Ref. cable.

cc: DDCI
C/PY via ADPC

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*Department of State*TELEGRAPH BRANCH
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Action

Control: 9278

EUR

Rec'd: June 19, 1952

Info

4:34 p.m.

SS

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 2044, June 19, 8 p.m.

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I called on Vishinsky as scheduled and had conversation with him which, to my mind was extremely interesting and somewhat encouraging. It was my first discussion of any political subject with any Sov official since my arrival here, and I think my long silence and restraint lent a desirable emphasis to it in Sov eyes. He received me courteously but quite seriously, there was no banter or small talk. Since he did not bring up the question of our relations I did so myself, referred to the Secretary's talk with Panyushkin, said I would not repeat the Secretary's remarks but could say that they reflected such reports as I had been obliged to my great regret to render about the violent anti-American propaganda with which I had been greeted on my arrival. I emphasized to him how painful this had been to me and how difficult it had been for me to discover any reasons for all this which could, conceivably be compatible with a desire on the Sov side to improve Sov-Amer relations. I said that I had worked hard up to this time and had done all in my power to bring about an improvement in the atmosphere surrounding the relations between the two governments, that I was not a pessimist and would be glad to continue to use my influence in this direction, but what I had seen here since my arrival really caused me to question whether there was any point in such effort, since it could not be entirely a one-way street.

I was less surprised by the content of Vishinsky's reply than by its terms and tone of utterance. He spoke quietly and reasonably, with no trace of vehemence or unfriendliness, and in manner quite different from that which he uses when he is reiterating propaganda formulas designed for the public record, or when he feels under any pressure from higher authority to be aggressive and unpleasant. He referred immediately to statements made on our side of the water, some of them, he said, by high-placed persons, and also to the Grow diary, the press attacks, etc. He made particular reference, in what seemed to me to be really plaintive terms, to the Gubichev case. He did not specifically mention Katyn, but I am certain that it was this he had most prominently in mind. He dwelt at some lengths on these matters and left no doubt about their being the Sov Govt's official

reason

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-2- #2044, June 19, 8 p.m., from Moscow

reason for the propaganda.

I did not wish to be drawn into an argument with him about propaganda exchanges and incidents of the past, and terminated the conversation by saying to him that I deeply hoped that the anti-Amer propaganda might cease at once and that so far as such things as the Grow diary were concerned, I would ask that we be judged by the present and not by the past. In parting he took occasion, to my surprise, to indicate that the Sov Govt had high regard for my person and that none of the unpleasantness had any reference to myself.

By way of comment on the above I would only say this. The past has taught us the need for greatest wariness in dealing with the Sovs precisely in their better moments. Eager optimism is the enemy of all progress at such junctures. We know that when we run across reactions and motives on their part which are at least understandable in normal human terms, they are usually intermingled with other impulses of which this cannot be said. What Vishinsky said to me of the background of the anti-Amer campaign is only part of the story, and the misunderstandings to which his statement points are extremely serious ones, since they have roots in the stubborn Sov refusal to understand the nature of Amer public opinion and its channels of expression. Nevertheless, I have the feeling that this talk was useful and encouraging. It indicated a certain concern for my opinion, and represented at least something like an effort on his part to present an explanation for the campaign--and that in itself was not something to be taken for granted. If nothing occurs in major Amer utterances to rock the boat in these coming days, I think we may soon see a relative decline in the amount of anti-Amer material appearing here. This does not mean that I think there is possibility that the tone of the Sov press will shortly become friendly to us. I merely think it possible, as a result of the Secretary's helpful statements to Panyushkin and in the light of this talk with Vishinsky, that the abnormal pitch of anti-Americanism may now wane fairly rapidly, if no new factor appears to exacerbate the situation. Its possibilities must have been fairly well exhausted by this time, in any case.

In light of above, I hope no major statement or move will now be made by us until I have chance to discuss matter with Secretary in London next week. For what I feel to be good reason, I have not told local press about this meeting with Vishinsky and hope that news of it may be closely held in Washington.

KENNAN

EOC:MS

MOTE: Mr. Barbour (EE) notified 5:45 p.m. 6/19/52 (CWC) FMH

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REMARKS:

Noted by DCI.